

Appl. No. 09/418,902
Amdt. Dated May 14, 2004
Reply to Office action of Jan. 21, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges extending between said side edges, said article comprising;

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet; and

a pair of end strips, each end strip being fixed, along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and extending between said side edges, said end strip including at least three sections, each said section ~~being distinctly elastic and distinctly positioned relative to~~ having an elasticity different from said other sections and a position different from said other sections,

a first section having generally elastic properties and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, including

a second section disposed longitudinally inward of said first section and extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said second section being characterized in that said first section is substantially more elastic than said second section, and

a third section positioned longitudinally inward of said second section, said third section having an inward portion spaced away from said topsheet and said absorbent core.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said second section is formed from an elastic material, said second section having at least one void provided therein, said void being adapted to substantially de-elasticize an area of said second section adjacent said void.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said first and second sections is secured to said topsheet.

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Claim 4 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip is formed from an elastic material.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 4, wherein said second section includes a plurality of voids adapted to substantially de-elasticize said second section.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section forms a waistband portion.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section is fixed along one of said end edges.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section includes a pair of side portions, each side portion being disposed laterally on one side of said inward portion, said disposable absorbent article further comprising:

a pair of side wall structures each having a pair of oppositely positioned end portions, wherein a first side wall structure is positioned between said core and one of said side edges and extends generally in the longitudinal direction, and said other side wall structure is positioned between said core and said other side edge and extends generally in the longitudinal direction; and

wherein each of said side portions of said third section is secured to one of said end portions of said side wall structure such that an intermediate portion of each of said side wall structure is biased generally upward.

Claim 10(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

Claim 11(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, further comprising a containment pocket having a depth dimension and bounded by a substantially continuous containment wall disposed about said core, said intermediate portions of said side wall structures and said inward sections of said third sections of said end strips being disposed to define, at least partially, said containment wall.

Claim 12(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 11, wherein said depth dimension is defined as a vertical distance between an average elevation of an inward edge of

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said inward portion and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being greater than about 1/4".

Claim 13(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 12, wherein said depth dimension is between about 3/4" and about 2".

Claim 14(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased upwardly through engagement with said side portions of said third sections to form, at least partially, one of said side wall structures.

Claim 15(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said side wall structure includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

Claim 16(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said first and second sections are fixed to said topsheet, and said third section extends upwardly from said topsheet and said core, and wherein said first and third sections are substantially elastic, and said second section is substantially inelastic.

Claim 17(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region, a back waist region longitudinally spaced from said front waist region, and a crotch region located between said front waist region and said back waist region, said core being disposed generally in said crotch region, said article further comprising an ear region extending laterally on each side of each of said front waist region and said back waist region, said end strip extending substantially laterally into two of said ear regions.

Claim 18(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region and a back waist region each defined partially by one of said end edges, and wherein said end strip is constructed from an elastic material and is secured to said topsheet so as to provide tension across one of said waist regions.

Claims 19-53 (canceled)

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Claim 54(currently amended): A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a pair of side walls, each side wall having oppositely disposed end portions, wherein one of said side walls extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge,

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region, said containment pocket being bounded by a substantially continuous sidewall disposed about said core and adapted to retain exudates received in said pocket; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip having at least three sections, each said section having generally elastic properties and distinctly positioned relative to said other sections, including,

a fixed waist section fixed along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, said waist section including an elastic end section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge to form an elastic waistband on said each one of said front and back waist regions, and

an elastic inward section disposed longitudinally inward of said fixed waist section and laterally extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said inward section having a central portion substantially spaced from said topsheet and said absorbent core; and

wherein said inward section is secured to said end portions of said side walls such that said side walls are biased generally upward, said inward section and said side walls substantially forming said continuous sidewall of said containment pocket.

Claim 55(Previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein each of said side portions is secured to one of said end portions of said side walls to apply a contractile force between said side walls.

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Claim 56(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said side walls includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

Claim 57(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 56, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased generally upwardly to form, at least partially, said side walls.

Claim 58(currently amended): The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said end strips is [[distinct]] an element of said article different from said topsheet and is formed from an elastic material.

Claim 59(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 58, wherein said fixed waist section further includes an intermediate section disposed between said elastic end section and said inward section, said intermediate section having a plurality of voids provided therein adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section.

Claim 60(previously presented): The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said pocket has a depth dimension defined as an average vertical distance between an inward edge of said inward section and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being between about 1/2" and about 4".

Claims 61-72 (canceled)

Claim 73(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said end strips has an end strip end edge extending in generally parallel relation with said end edge of said disposable absorbent article, and a pair of end strip side edges extending in generally perpendicular relation with said end strip end edge; and

wherein each of said first, second, and third sections extends from one side edge to said other side edge of said end strip and in generally parallel relation with said end edge of said disposable absorbent article.

Claim 74(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 73, wherein said end strip consists of said first section, said second section, and said third section.

Claim 75(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section, said second section, and said third section form the entirety of said end strip.

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Claim 76(New): A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a pair of side walls, each side wall having oppositely disposed end portions, wherein one of said side walls extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip having a plurality of sections, each said section having generally elastic properties and being positioned differently from said other sections, including,

a fixed waist section fixed along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, said waist section including an elastic end section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge, and

an elastic inward section disposed longitudinally inward of said fixed waist section and laterally extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said elastic inward section having a central portion spaced upwardly from said topsheet and said absorbent core;

wherein said inward section is secured to said end portions of said side walls such that said side walls are biased generally upward,

wherein each of said end strips is an element of the article different from said topsheet and is formed from an elastic material; and

wherein said fixed waist section further includes an intermediate section disposed between said elastic end section and said elastic inward section, said intermediate section having a plurality of voids provided therein adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section.

Claim 77(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 76, wherein said end strip is formed from an elastic material.

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Claim 78(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 76, wherein said waist section includes an elastic end section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge to form an elastic waistband on each of said front and back waist regions.

Claim 79 (New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 76, wherein said inward section and said side walls form a continuous sidewall, said continuous sidewall defining, at least partially, a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region.

Claim 80(New): The disposable absorbent article of claim 76, wherein each said end strip consists of said fixed waist section and said elastic inward section.